



THE GREENING OF DETROIT

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To Whom It May Concern,

Though Detroit is the Motor City and largely known for a history of industry and manufacturing, what many people don't know is that Detroit has a long history of farming. From the French ribbon farms of the 1700s, to the migration of southern farmers to the Detroit area for manufacturing jobs in the 1900s, Detroit residents know more about food growing than your average urban dweller. This knowledge is an asset to Detroit communities and is being embraced and furthered through a local food movement. The Greening of Detroit, in partnership with Michigan State University, Earthworks Urban Farm/Capuchin Soup Kitchen, and the Detroit Agriculture Network, make up the Garden Resource Program Collaborative. Established in 2003, the Collaborative works to support community, school and family gardens and small-scale urban farms in the City by providing resources, education and opportunities for connection between gardeners. There are currently more than 1,000 gardens in the program ranging from small, back yard garden plots to multiple acre farm sites. These gardens involve an estimated 14,000 individuals, building a community-based food system addressing issues including food security, nutrition, community building, beautification, the environment, crime, and most relevant to the Cottage Food bill, entrepreneurship and the local economy.

Many of the gardeners we work with have started small scale food businesses, selling their fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets, restaurants and to community food programs. These entrepreneurs are accomplished in food processing as well as food growing and would like to expand their businesses to include value added products such as jams, baked goods, pickled vegetables and dried herbs. Current food policy, which requires value added products to be processed in a certified commercial kitchen, is a significant barrier to the further development of these businesses in Detroit. The passage of the Cottage Food bill – HB 5837 and HB 5280 – would have significant, positive implications for this group, allowing small businesses to process certain value added products within their own home. This would open up new markets and opportunities for income generation as well as skill development. In order to support the further success of small food businesses and the great assets they are to neighborhoods and cities across Michigan; please pass the Cottage Food bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Zahn

"Grown in Detroit" Sales and Community Outreach Coordinator
The Greening of Detroit